WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An engine control system for a locomotive, the control system comprising:
a memory device for storing computer instructions;

a computer processor for executing the computer instructions stored in the memory device, the computer instructions configuring the computer processor to output one or more commands when one or more predefined conditions exist; and

engine control hardware for controlling the locomotive engine in response to commands output by the computer processor;

the computer processor receiving a signal indicative of whether an automatic engine stop system is enabled;

the computer instructions configuring the computer processor to normally output an engine shutdown command when the automatic engine stop system is enabled and a set of automatic engine shutdown parameters are satisfied;

the computer processor receiving an inhibit command;

the computer instructions further configuring the computer processor to at least delay outputting the engine shutdown command in response to the inhibit command.

2. An engine control system for a locomotive, the control system comprising:

a memory for storing computer instructions;

a computer processor for executing the computer instructions stored in memory, the computer instructions configuring the computer processor to output one or more commands when one or more predefined conditions exist; and

engine control hardware for controlling the locomotive engine in response to commands output by the computer processor;

the computer processor being electrically connected to a device generating a signal indicative of whether an automatic engine stop system is enabled;

the computer instructions configuring the computer processor to normally output an engine shutdown command when the automatic engine stop system is enabled and a set of automatic engine shutdown parameters are satisfied;

the computer processor being electrically connected to a device generating an inhibit command responsive to an administrative device; and

the computer instructions further configuring the computer processor to at least delay outputting the engine shutdown command in response to receiving the inhibit command.

3. The control system of claim 2 wherein the administrative device is on-board the locomotive.

4. The control system of claim 2 wherein the administrative device is off-board the locomotive.

5. The control system of claim 2 wherein the delay of outputting the engine shutdown command continues until a signal to terminate the delay is received.

6. The control system of claim 2 wherein the computer instructions configure the computer processor to delay outputting the engine shutdown command for a predefined duration of time after the computer processor receives the inhibit command.

7. The control system of claim 6 wherein the computer instructions configure the computer processor to disregard the inhibit command in response to a change in an operating parameter during the predefined duration of time.

8. The control system of claim 2 wherein the computer instructions configure the computer processor to normally output a motor command to the engine control hardware in response to a change in an operating parameter, and further configure the computer processor to withhold the motor command if the automatic engine stop system is disabled.

9. The control system of claim 2, further comprising a notification system providing a notification in response to a notification command from the computer

processor, the computer instructions configuring the computer processor to output the notification command when the automatic engine stop system is disabled and in response to a change in an operating parameter of the locomotive.

10. The control system of claim 9 wherein providing a notification is providing an alarm message to the administrative device.

11. The control system of claim 2 wherein the computer instructions configure the computer processor to record fault data in memory when the automatic engine stop system is disabled and in response to a change in an operating parameter of the locomotive.

12. The control system of claim 2 wherein the computer instructions further configuring the computer processor to send data indicating the automatic engine stop system is disabled to the administrative device when the automatic engine stop system is disabled and in response to a change in an operating parameter of the locomotive.

13. The control system of claim 12 wherein the operating parameter is from the list: a braking parameter, a motoring parameter, a configuration setting, a throttle setting, an operating mode, an operator authorization, and an administrative command.

14. The control system of claim 2 wherein the computer processor being further electrically connected to a device for receiving an inter-consist communication from a second locomotive, said computer instructions configuring the computer processor to output the one or more commands as a function of the received inter-consist communication.

15. The control system of claim 14 wherein the inter-consist communication includes a relative position of the second locomotive, said computer instructions configuring the computer processor to output the engine shut down command as a

function of a relative position of the locomotive and as a function of the relative position of the second locomotive.

16. A method of implementing an automatic engine stop system in a locomotive, the method comprising deactivating the automatic engine stop system in response to receiving an instruction to prevent the automatic engine stop system from automatically shutting down the locomotive without otherwise disabling the continued operation of the automatic engine stop system.

17. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for implementing the method of claim 16.

18. The method of claim 16 wherein deactivating includes receiving a deactivation command, wherein when the deactivation command is received generally contemporaneous with the automatic engine stop system being enabled an automatic shutdown of the locomotive is at least temporarily delayed.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein receiving a deactivation command renders the automatic engine stop system at least temporarily inactive, the method further comprising automatically reactivating the automatic engine stop system a predetermined amount of time after receiving a deactivation command.

20. The method of claim 18 wherein receiving a deactivation command renders the automatic engine stop system at least temporarily inactive, the method further comprising automatically reactivating the automatic engine stop system in response to change in an operating parameter of the locomotive.

21. The method of claim 20 wherein the operating parameter is from the list: a braking parameter, a motoring parameter, a configuration setting, a throttle setting, an operating mode, an operator authorization, and an administrative command.

22. The method of claim 16 wherein the locomotive is one of a plurality of locomotives operating in a consist, each of said locomotives having an automatic engine stop system, and wherein deactivating includes receiving a deactivation command in each of said locomotives which, when a deactivation command is received generally contemporaneous with the automatic engine stop system for the associated locomotive being enabled an automatic shutdown of the associated locomotive is at least temporarily delayed.

23. The method of claim 16 wherein the locomotive is one of a plurality of locomotives operating in a consist, each of said locomotives having an automatic engine stop system, and wherein deactivating includes deactivating the automatic engine stop system of said one locomotive while another of said locomotives is automatically shutdown.

24. The method of claim 16 wherein the locomotive is one of a plurality of locomotives operating in a consist, further comprising receiving an inter-consist communication from a second locomotive in the consist, said deactivating being responsive to the received inter-consist communication.

25. The method of claim 16 wherein said deactivating being a function of a position of the locomotive.

26. The method of claim 25 wherein the locomotive is one of a plurality of locomotives operating in a consist, further comprising receiving an inter-consist communication from a second locomotive in the consist, said inter-consist communication including a position of the second locomotive in the consist, said deactivating further being a function of the position of the second locomotive.

27. An apparatus for controlling a locomotive, said locomotive equipped with an automatic engine stop system, the apparatus comprising:

a receiving interface for receiving a deactivation command from the automatic engine stop system;

an input device for receiving an instruction to override the received deactivation command; and

a transmitting interface coupled to the input device for transmitting a control command, said control command being something other than the received deactivation command, said control command at least delaying the automatic engine stop system from automatically shutting down the locomotive.

28. A method of controlling a locomotive, said locomotive configured with an automatic engine stop system, the method comprising receiving an engine shutdown command from the automatic engine stop system and generating a command other than the received engine shutdown command to at least delay the automatic engine stop system from automatically shutting down the locomotive.

29. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for implementing the method of claim 28.

30. A method for prompting a locomotive operational control system to enable an automatic engine stop system, the method comprising generating a notification when the automatic engine stop system is disabled and in response to a change in an operating parameter of the locomotive.

31. The method of claim 30 wherein the operating parameter is from the list: a braking parameter, a motoring parameter, a configuration setting, a throttle setting, an operating mode, an operator authorization, and an administrative command.

32. The method of claim 30 wherein generating a notification is generating a notification message to be transmitted to an administrative device.

33. The method of claim 30 wherein generating a notification includes generating a notification until the automatic engine stop system is enabled.

34. The method of claim 30 wherein the locomotive is one of a plurality of locomotives operating in consist and wherein generating a notification includes generating a notification within each of said locomotives.

35. The method of claim 30, further comprising transferring information to an administrative device when the automatic engine stop system is disabled and in response to a change in an operating parameter of the locomotive, the transferred information including an instruction to enable the automatic engine stop system.

36. The method of claim 30, further comprising automatically recording fault data when the automatic engine stop system is disabled and in response to the change in the operating parameter of the locomotive.

37. The method of claim 30, further comprising automatically transmitting fault data to an administrative device when the automatic engine stop system is disabled and in response to the change in the operating parameter of the locomotive.

38. The method of claim 30 wherein generating a notification includes generating the notification while the locomotive is motoring.

39. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for implementing the method of claim 30.

40. A method for providing an instruction to an administration device to enable an automatic engine stop system, the method comprising inhibiting motoring of the locomotive until the automatic engine stop system is enabled.

41. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for implementing the method of claim 40.

42. The method of claim 40, further comprising transferring information to the administrative device when the automatic engine stop system is disabled and in

response to a change in an operating parameter of the locomotive, the transferred information including an instruction to enable the automatic engine stop system.

43. The method of claim 40, further comprising generating a notification when the automatic engine stop system is disabled and in response to a change in an operating parameter of the locomotive.

44. The method of claim 43 wherein generating a notification is generating a notification message to the administrative device.

45. The method of claim 43 wherein the operating parameter is from the list: a braking parameter, a motoring parameter, a configuration setting, a throttle setting, an operating mode, an operator authorization, and an administrative command.

46. The method of claim 43 wherein the locomotive is one of a plurality of locomotives operating in consist, further comprising generating a notification to each of said locomotives.

47. The method of claim 40, further comprising automatically recording fault data when the automatic engine stop system is disabled and in response to a change in an operating parameter of the locomotive.

48. The method of claim 40, further comprising automatically transmitting fault data to an administrative device when the automatic engine stop system is disabled and in response to a change in an operating parameter of the locomotive.

49. The method of claim 40, further comprising receiving an instruction from the administrative device to prevent an automatic shutdown of the locomotive without otherwise disabling the continued operation of the automatic engine stop system.

50. The method of claim 40, further comprising receiving an instruction from the administrative device to enable the automatic engine stop system.

51. An automatic engine stop system in a locomotive, said locomotive being one of a plurality of locomotives in a consist, the system comprising:

memory for storing computer instructions;

a computer processor for executing the computer instructions stored in memory, the computer instructions configuring the computer processor to output one or more commands;

a receiver electrically coupled to the computer processor for receiving an inter-consist communication from a second locomotive in the consist; and

engine control hardware for controlling the locomotive engine in response to commands output by the computer processor, said computer instructions configuring the computer processor to output an engine shutdown command to the engine control hardware as a function of the received inter-consist communication.

52. A method of implementing an automatic engine stop system in a locomotive, said locomotive being one of a plurality of locomotives in a consist, the method comprising:

receiving an inter-consist communication from a second locomotive in the consist; and

generating an engine shutdown command responsive to or a function of the received inter-consist communication.

53. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for implementing the method of claim 52.

54. A method of implementing an automatic engine stop system in a locomotive, the method comprising generating an engine shutdown command as a function of a position of the locomotive.

55. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for implementing the method of claim 54.

56. The method of claim 54 wherein the locomotive is one of a plurality of locomotives in a consist, the method further comprising receiving an inter-consist communication from a second locomotive within the consist, said generating an engine shutdown command further being a function of the received inter-consist communication.

57. The method of claim 56 wherein the inter-consist communication includes a position of the second locomotive.

58. A method of implementing an automatic engine stop system in a locomotive, the method comprising generating an engine shutdown command as a function of a location of a crew member.

59. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for implementing the method of claim 58.